(Mount Clipping In Space Below)

Russo Anticipating Shaw Defense Angle

By LINDA CALDWELL

Perry Raymond Russo is apparently out to soften punches which defense attorneys for Clay Shaw are expected to throw at him during Shaw's upcoming trial on charges of conspiring to kill President Kennedy.

Russo, a dark, affable insurance salesman, has emerged so far as the axis in Orleans Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison's investigation into an alleged plot to kill Kennedy. Shaw, former director of the New Orleans International Trade Mart, is accused of participating in that plot.

Russo, who claims to have overheard the plot, said here yesterday the defense will probably produce witnesses to testify that he is homosexual, was once picked up as a suspect in an alleged rape and attempted to commit suicide.

In a talk here before the Lakeshore Lions Club — his second civic club appearance here within the past two weeks — Russo brought out into the open accusations he expects the defense to make in an effort to discredit him as a witness.

Russo said in an interview following his talk that he does not know if he is Garrison's chief witnesses. His testimony, however, was the backbone of a preliminary hearing which bound Shaw over for trial on the sensational charges.

Filed Affidavit

Russo said a Mrs. Lillie Mae McMains, whom he knew in New Orleans as Sandra Moffett, would probably testify that in 1955 she filed an affidavit accusing him of rape. He said she never filed charges and had him arrested only "to see to see him."

He said he was taken to headquarters to confront Miss Moffett, at which time a "detective spun her around in a swivel chair and she fell off."

Russo said he tried to get the girl to read magazines, but that she was only interested in "discussing sex."

"Subsequent to that she met a preacher," he said.

Russo also said that Mrs. McMains would probably testify he tried to commit suicide by "slashing his wrists."

Russo said the defense will also produce a witness to testify that he was homosexual. He said the anticipated witness was a member of a baseball team which Russo's Young Republican team defeated.

Questioned about the after effects of the investigation, he said "I don't think I'd do it again."

He added later that the case has cut down on his work productivity and will probably lose him some future friends.

A club member questioned Russo about the length of time that elapsed before he told his story of overhearing a plot to kill the president.

"I'm sure you people are familiar with the same thing," he said. "It wasn't very infrequent you could hear people say, 'If I had a gun I'd shoot him.'"

Plaquemines Case

He cited the current allegation against a Plaquemines Parish man accused of conspiring to harm political boss Leander Perez and asked how many times someone had been overheard to say they would like to kill him.

Russo answered all questions, except those dealing with defendant Clay Shaw. He said he does not believe he is violating judicial guidelines applicable to principles in the case.

Russo was also queried about what has been considered a glaring conflict by critics of the Garrison investigation, namely that Garrison announced he had solved the assassination prior to the time Russo came forward with his story.

"I don't know if he had the case solved or not," Russo said. "Whether he could have proved it, I don't know, but I'm willing to take his word."

The young insurance salesman also discussed the late David W. Ferrie, the bizarre pilot whom Garrison claims was a co-conspirator with Shaw.

Ferrie died shortly before Garrison announced he had "solved" the assassination. Orleans Parish Coroner Nicholas Chetta ruled he died of natural causes.

Russo, however, said he doubts this is the case. He suggested Ferrie could have prompted his own death by failing to take a drug to counteract high blood pressure.

Russo repeated his allegations that National Broadcasting Company representatives made two attempts to "intimidate" him while preparing an hour-documentary highly critical of the probe.

He said NBC's original approach was to "allow me to state that my testimony been doctored under hypnosis."

"Then they said why not wipe the slate clean and say, 'I'm sorry but I lied.'"

Russo said he refused to go along.

"I saw what I saw and heard what I heard," he said.

Russo said there has been no "over attempt" on his life, but that he was threatened twice over the telephone in Baton Rouge prior to moving to New Orleans, April 1.

The speaker was introduced by Lakeshore Lions President Fred Belcher.

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